

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the amendments above and the remarks following is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-27 are in this case. Claims 17-27 were withdrawn by the Examiner from consideration as drawn to a non-elected invention. Claims 1-16 have been rejected under § 102(e) or § 103(a). Independent claim 1 and dependent claims 2 and 9 have now been amended. Withdrawn claims 17-27 have been canceled without prejudice, to be reintroduced in a divisional application.

The claims before the Examiner are directed toward a method for forming an abrasive non-woven cloth in which at least two layers are formed in the raw fiber web and are then processed so as to interlink the fibers to form a cloth. This method allows production of a cloth with one abrasive side using a production line which is minimally modified from a standard non-woven cloth production line. This is in clear contrast to the methods of the cited art which require separate production of two cloth layers which are subsequently joined.

Election/Restriction

In anticipation of allowance of this application, the withdrawn claims 17-27 are currently canceled without prejudice. The Applicant reserves the right to submit these claims in a divisional application in due course.

Priority

The Applicant notes the Examiner's comments regarding the need to file a certified copy of the priority document. This matter will be addressed shortly.

§ 102(e) & § 103(a) Rejections

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-11 and 14-16 under § 102(e) as being anticipated by Chen I (US 2004/0115431) or Chen II (US 2005/0136772). The Examiner has also rejected claims 12 and 13 under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chen I or Chen II. The Examiner's rejections are respectfully traversed.

Both Chen references relate to forming of a non-woven abrasive material. Chen has correctly identified the advantages of employing a two-layer structure where one layer provides the abrasive properties and the other provides increased absorbance and user comfort to hold. However, the production methods of both Chen references all require separate formation of the two layers as non-woven cloths followed by a separate step of attaching the layers. This effectively doubles the production line equipment required for forming the cloth, and requires additional components for the attachment, rendering the entire production process complex and expensive.

In contrast, the present invention employs superposition of at least two layers of fibers of different compositions prior to bonding to form a cloth. The subsequent processing then interlinks the fibers to form a cloth with a plurality of layers. This processing is essentially unchanged from the processing required to form a single layer cloth, thereby enabling the use of simple and cost effective production equipment.

While continuing to traverse the Examiner's rejections, the Applicant has, in order to expedite the prosecution, chosen to amend independent claim 1 in order to clarify and emphasize the crucial distinctions between the method of the present invention and that of the Chen patents cited by the Examiner. Specifically, claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the non-woven web of fibers includes a second layer of

fibers adjacent to a second surface of the web, and having a composition different from the composition of the first layer. Claim 1 has further been amended to clarify that the web is subsequently processed so as to interlink the fibers to form a cloth including layers corresponding to the first and second layers of fibers. These amendments make it further evident that the method of claim 1 processes the fiber web to turn its layers into a corresponding layered cloth without requiring independent formation of two cloth layers.

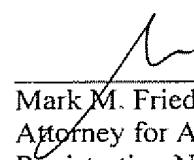
Dependent claims 2 and 9 have been amended to render them consistent with the amendment of independent claim 1.

Support for these amendments can be found throughout the specification, and specifically, from page 14, line 12 through page 16, line 14.

Amended independent claim 1 now features language which makes it absolutely clear that the method of the present invention includes superposition of at least two layers of fibers of different compositions followed by processing to interlink the fibers to form an abrasive cloth with a plurality of layers. The Applicant believes that the amendment of the claims completely overcomes the Examiner's rejections of claim 1, and hence also dependent claims 2-16, on § 102(e) and § 103 grounds.

In view of the above amendments and remarks it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 1, and hence also dependent claims 2-16, are in condition for allowance. Prompt notice of allowance is respectfully and earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: June 7, 2006